

The Agency's 30th birthday is fast approaching and we are largely unprepared for the declassification review of 30 year old CIA documents. Executive Order 11652, Sec. 5(E)(2), requires that classified materials be reviewed for possible declassification prior to their becoming 30 years old. Although documents originated before June 1972 do not automatically become declassified on their 30th anniversary, the review requirement has existed since 1972 and the Agency must act now to develop a review program for CIA documents.

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Several program alternatives are feasible but the location, volume and proprietors of 30 year old materials must be identified before the alternatives can be knowledgeably weighed. Technically, all 30 year old documents are subject to declassification review, but it is unrealistic to expect that we will be able to locate every 30 year old document in the Agency. In addition, the spirit of declassification review is that the declassified material can be ~~XXXX~~ offered to the National Archives for storage, preservation and study by researchers. For this reason, the review program should encompass only those collections of documents determined by the Archivist of the United States, through records retention schedules, to warrant preservation. In the Agency, such historical materials would be stored at the Archives & Records Center. Thirty year old documents in active case files would be ~~exempted~~ ^{EXCLUDED} from review in any program since it is highly doubtful whether such documents would be declassified because of the requirement for sources and methods protection.

Program emphasis then should focus initially on the first two decades of CIA ~~ma~~ Classified material stored at the Agency Archives. The statistics below represent the Archives holdings by directorate for those periods:

	<u>1947-1956</u>	<u>/1957-1966</u>
DDI	2,064	4,192 cu. ft.
DDO	1,044	2,942
DDA	531	473
DCI	134	406
DDS&T	130	1,681
	<u>3,885</u>	<u>9,694 cu. ft.</u>

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The second decade figures could be misleading since many 1966 documents are not yet at the Archives but will be by 1996 when they are due for review. The above breakdown clearly shows the mix of expertise required for a declassification review program. Based on the above information, three program alternatives can be considered: a centralized, DDA managed program; a centralized DDO managed program; or a decentralized, DDA managed program.

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If the primary objective of the declassification review program is to get the job done efficiently, the DDA managed, centralized approach seems the best answer. A team concept using the talent and resources from all parts of the Agency would maximize coordination, standardization and administrative efficiency while minimizing bureaucratic parochialisms. Under this proposal the DDA would organize a staff composed of positions allocated to the four directorates in proportion to their volume of records at the Archives & Records Center. Based on those figures, it appears that 53% of the positions on the staff should be filled by the DDI, 27% by the DDO, 14% by the DDA and 3% by the DDS&T. Allocations would remain flexible so that positions could be adjusted. For instance, /DDI estimative materials where source information has been carefully eliminated might not require as thorough scrutiny as DDO operational reports. Therefore, a redistribution of positions might favor the DDO. Assignments to these positions would be the prerogative of the individual directorates; the DDA would manage and provide centralized guidance and support for the program.

These groups of officers would be entrusted to declassify their parent directorates' material. Certain economies result from this team arrangement. The time required to review documents would be minimized if a central point had the authority for declassification, thereby eliminating the need for multiple reviews by different components, except in unusual cases. From the Information & Privacy Staff's experience on referrals, decentralization is clearly not the most efficient way to process large volumes of paper requiring secondary and tertiary reviews.

Standardization of review procedures for declassification would be another benefit of a centralized staff. Using the IPS experience again, they find that each directorate approaches the review for release of information a little differently. Because of the decentralized program, no standardization in release exists. A centralized declassification review staff would encourage standardization through better communication and coordination.

Administrative efficiencies which argue for centralization include the indexing/ notification responsibility and processing costs. According to the Executive Order, all holders of documents which have been declassified must be notified of such action. A centralized staff could more easily handle the indexing & notification requirements. The paper processing and xeroxing costs are minimized in a centralized staff where referrals are not routine procedure. Although seemingly insignificant, such paper costs can be astronomical.

The efficiencies to be gained by a centralized approach far outweigh the political difficulties in implementation. If Agency management is truly concerned about ~~the~~ overcoming the traditional parochialisms often displayed by the various directorates, now ~~it is~~ ^{is} ~~the time to~~ cross the lines with a centralized approach to the Agency-wide problem of ~~the~~ 30 year review.

A second proposal worth considering is for a centralized, DDO managed program. If the primary objective of the declassification review is the defense of information and protection of documents, this approach appears to be the best. Substantial DDO input relative to protection of sources & methods will be required in any program which is developed, and it could be argued that non-DDO reviewers might not fully appreciate the DDO concerns in this area. With the DDO as program manager, there would be some assurance that those interests would be adequately safe-guarded. As we have done with the OSS and predecessor agency reviews, the DDA might transfer the responsibility for declassification of ~~all~~ all CIA documents to the DDO. The review team would be given the authority to declassify documents created by Agency components based on guidelines provided by the originating offices. Since the responsibility for damage assessments rests with the DDO, their ability to provide accurate assessments based on the accumulation of information in the public domain would certainly be enhanced if they controlled the program.

Coincidentally, the DDO has organized its own Classification Review Branch to handle the 30 year review requirement (see attached DDO Notice). Since they have already established a structure, perhaps they would be willing to accept the Agency-wide program. The other directorates would, of course, provide guidance to the DDO on the declassification of their materials.

Over the years the normal managerial approach to Agency problems has been decentralization. If the maximization of Agency resources is not a primary goal in the establishment of a review program, then a decentralized program is acceptable. Decentralizing the review effort would involve each directorate allocating space and personnel in setting up its own staff to review its own material. Since the DDA has the responsibility for an Agency-wide program, the DDA declassification staff would be expected to provide coordinative support to the other components, as is now done by the Information & Privacy Staff for the release of information to the public. With the DDO having taken the initiative for this effort already, the decentralized approach may be politically more palatable at this time. That is the only advantage to decentralization.

The inefficiency of decentralized programs is illustrated by two examples in the DDA: the Information & Privacy Staff and the records management program. The referral of documents for multiple reviews becomes a time-consuming process which delays the processing of requests and causes a severe backlog of responses. This is true in IPS and will also be the case with ^{a decentralized} ~~the~~ 30 year review. The Information Systems Analysis Staff has been unable to accomplish any meaningful objectives in records management because of the decentralization of the program throughout the Agency. Each directorate places a varying degree of emphasis in the records program goals, thereby crippling the program.

We should proceed expeditiously to design ^a ~~the~~ program, find space, recruit and train personnel and set up operating procedures. A program manager should be assigned to coordinate the directorates requirements and set up the staff. At the moment, a Declassification Review Staff of 16 persons, reporting to the Chief, ISAS under the Assistant for Information/DDA, seems appropriate. (This group should be headed by a DDO or DDI officer) To insure appropriate concern for the protection of intelligence sources and methods, ✓

At this stage, any 30 year review program is better than current Agency posture of trying to wish the problem away. September 17, 1977 is the birthday of CIA and this should be our target date for an operational program. I strongly urge consideration of the DDA managed, centralized approach to 30 year review. Further, I recommend this paper be a priority subject for discussion at the next Information Review Committee meeting.

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STATINTL

SPEED LETTER

REPLY REQUESTED

DATE

20 October 1976

YES

NO

LETTER NO.

STATINTL

TO :

ATTN:

FROM:

DC/ISS -

x1901

Hal -

As requested, here is my informal reaction to the draft paper on declassification, brought to me by [redacted]. It is not, I'm afraid, a proposal I can support. Its major flaw is its failure to deal with declassification as an integral part of the records management process. We are emphasizing the need to review old files first, to determine what their disposition should be, and only after retention has been agreed upon will we address their downgrading or declassification. When the process is looked at in this way, decentralized handling is seen to be the most logical approach, and the draft's arguments for centralization collapse. The records programs of the several Directorates should be guided by the policies of the central Records Admin Branch, under the DDA, but ultimately responsibility for records has to be seen as a responsibility of line management.

We are convinced that in our own records review and declassification program the work must be the work done by knowledgeable operations personnel who can establish and maintain the closest possible working relationship with senior division and staff managers. I doubt that we could achieve the kind of liaison we need if the program were

SIGNATURE

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DATE

centralized outside the DDO. This does not translate, however, into agreement to see the total Agency program centralized in the DDO. Frankly, we have a full plate with our own records holdings, and no efficiencies will be gained if DDO personnel are charged with reviewing the files of other directorates, or with managing that review.

I urge a return to the drawing board, with emphasis this time on the records management aspects of the declassification review problem. We agree we must get moving on declassification (that's why we're organizing our new Branch, and continuing our [redacted] project on OSS records) but can't support the kind of program described in this draft.

Sorry.

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RETURN TO ORIGINATOR